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Thinking Ahead to 2009

Washington's conservation districts have been teaching people the importance of soil and how to conserve it ever since the days of the dust bowl. That information is, of course, just as important today, and there are exciting opportunities for soil education on the 2009 horizon for Washington's conservation districts.

NACD has chosen "soils" for its 2009 Stewardship Theme, and it has provided a whole range of materials to help educate youth about this topic. (See pages eight and nine for information on educational resources.)

Many districts in our state are engaged in a wide variety of excellent soil education activities for youth and adults. This issue describes some of those activities, and many other ideas were reported in the September 2007 issue of *Outreach News*, including a compact disc with great soil education resources provided by Toby Rodgers of NRCS. (To view past issues of *Outreach News*, visit www.scc.wa.gov/outreach. Scroll to the bottom and click on "more resources.")



There are so many important aspects of soil education, from helping people understand the crucial role soil plays in sustaining life on earth to teaching best management practices for soil conservation. It is exciting to see the topic of "soil" being elevated to a national conversation, and 2009 looks like it will be filled with opportunities for getting the word out!



"A cloak of loose, soft material, held to the earth's hard surface by gravity, is all that lies between life and lifelessness."

Wallace H. Fuller,
Soils of the Desert Southwest, 1975



Sponsor a Soil Poster Contest in Your Area!

We would like to invite all CDs to help promote soil education in 2009 by participating in NACD's poster contest for K-12 students. Districts that choose to sponsor a local poster contest can send their winning entries to the Commission for state-level judging (which will take place at the WADE training in June), and state winning entries will be sent to NACD for national-level judging.

NACD's 2009 stewardship and poster contest theme is "Dig It: The Secrets of Soil," in conjunction with the Smithsonian National Museum's exhibit of the same name. The Washington State Envirothon (WSE) committee decided to help publicize the contest and encourage as many districts as possible to be involved. We would like to bring the importance of soil and soil conservation practices into the spotlight for the upcoming year.

WSE Vice-Chair, Cindy Pierce (Skagit CD,) has sponsored a number of poster contests. She explained that one benefit for districts is that agreements can be made with the winners to use images of their posters in future publications. For example, Cindy has used small – sized images of the posters on book-marks that she distributes.

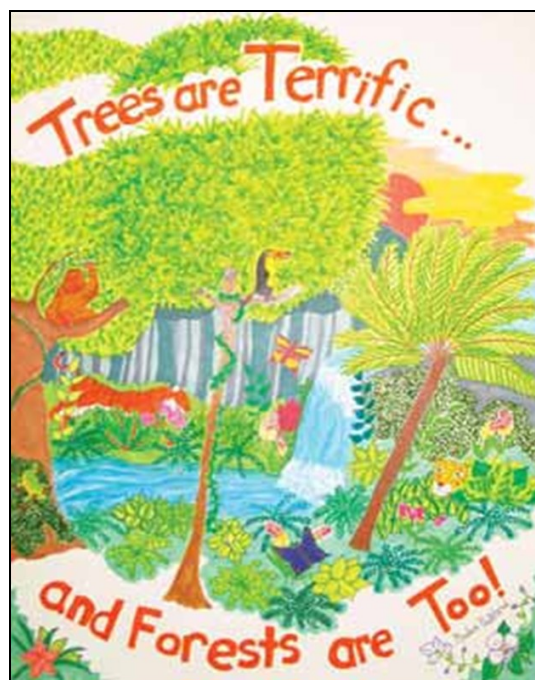
WSE Secretary, Susie Vanderburg, adapted support materials created by NACD for the poster contest to be available for Washington districts on the Commission's website: www.scc.wa.gov. (See page eight for details.)

We will be including more information about the soil poster contest and other soil education activities in future issues of this newsletter. **If your district is sponsoring soil education events or activities, please let us know!** For more information about the contest, feel free to contact Cindy Pierce, Skagit CD (360) 428-4313, cindy@skagitcd.org; or Susie Vanderburg: (360) 407-6274, SusieV@scc.wa.gov.



Past winner of an NACD poster contest

DIG IT!
The Secrets of Soil



Past winner of an NACD poster contest

District Ideas and News

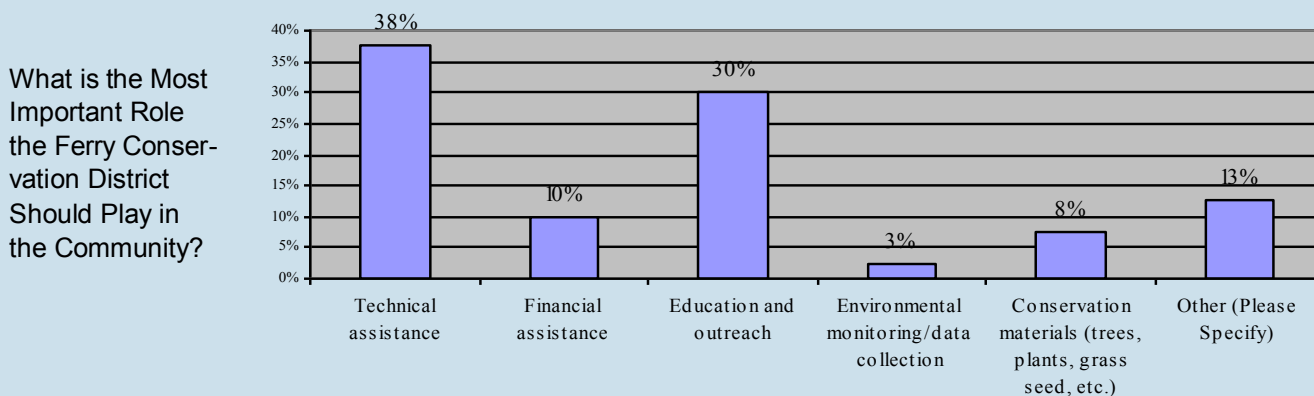
Ferry CD Surveys Landowners

By Sherri Barcroft (from Spring/Summer 2008 FDC newsletter)

Last February, Ferry CD posted a landowner survey on our website. There were 45 participants with 87% being over the age of 50 and 82% owning less than 40 acres. A total of 57% indicated they were using their land as a residence. Survey questions included:

- 1) What are your challenges as a landowner? 28% indicated that invasive plants were the number one challenge, with pest control and soil fertility coming in 2nd and 3rd respectively.
- 2) What prevents you from implementing conservation practices? 25% indicated that lack of knowledge is the primary reason, with 24% citing cost, and 15% stating time as the second and third reasons that prevent landowners from implementing conservation practices.
- 3) What is the primary natural resource concern for your property? 43% indicated weeds were the biggest concern, while 28% responded that fire is, and 18% said water is.

Respondents also indicated that Technical Assistance is the most important role of the conservation district, with 60% of the Other category indicating they felt all the activities were important. (See chart.) Workshops people would like to see in the future included weed prevention and identification, wildfire prevention, soil testing, native plant landscaping, and water quality testing, to name a few. Full survey results are available upon request.



Franklin CD Expands Education Programs

Franklin CD's outstanding education program is expanding, much to the benefit of eastern Washington students. FCD has contracted with Benton CD for Rachel Little to coordinate the "Salmon in the Classroom" program, expanding from 14 tanks to 18 in Franklin, Adams, and Grant Counties. (Rachel will also continue the program in the Benton and S. Yakima region.) FCD also has a mini-grant for teachers (up to \$500) for activities such as field trips to hatcheries and dams. (One school bought a webcam so parents at home could follow the salmon's progress in the tank.)



Examining a kernel during Wheat Week

The "Water on Wheels" program is also expanding up the Yakima Valley. Denise Buck, a new contract employee for the North Yakima CD, is implementing the WOW curriculum in Kittitas, Yakima, and Klickitat Counties. She comes from OSU extension in Klamath Falls where she was a watershed educator. "Wheat Week" is expanding as well. FCD is hiring a Wheat Week educator in Spokane and one in Waterville at the Foster Creek CD. The goal is to teach 40 Wheat Weeks across eastern Washington. For more information, contact FCD's Kara Kaelber: kara-kaelber@wa.nacdnet.org.

District Ideas and News (cont.)

Foster Creek CD Builds New Soil Tunnel

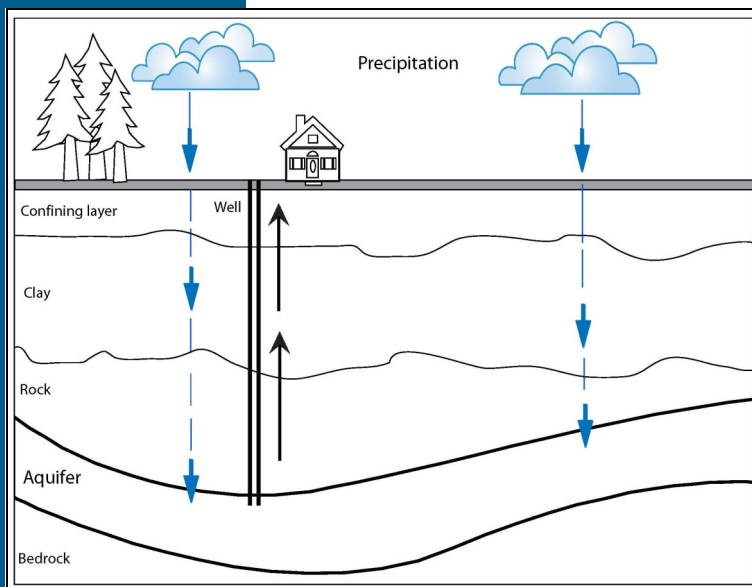
Foster Creek CD recently constructed a new soil tunnel to teach people about the amazing and intricate world beneath our feet. Kristine Desgroseillier, FCCD's natural resource technician, spearheaded the project and had this to say about kids' experiences with the soil tunnel at the county fair: "I think that in general there is a bit of surprise since many kids give no thought to where their water comes from or where it goes after being used. This is especially true for 'city' kids that may not even know about wells or septic systems. Most of the time they would see something in the tunnel like tree roots and have to run 'above-ground' to see where the actual tree was located. They are so observant!"



Outside and inside Ferry CD's new soil tunnel



Clark CD Intrigues Students with "Soil Painting"



Mandy Clark, Resource Technician for Clark CD, spent several weeks teaching local students about soils and groundwater aquifers. Students then colored the diagram shown left with paints made from soil.

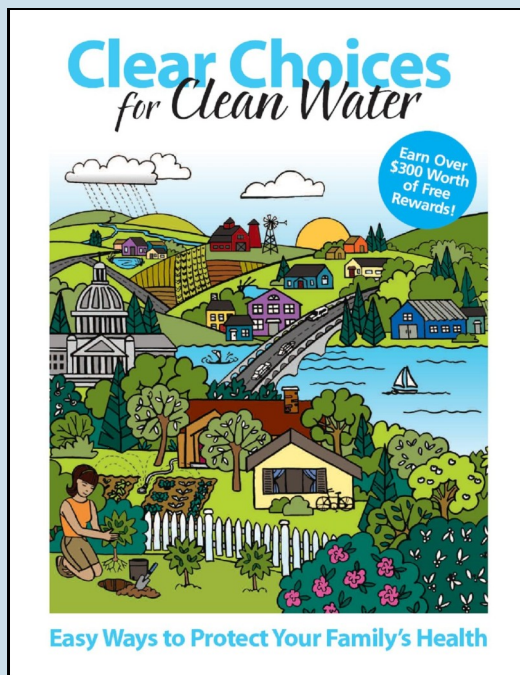


If you'd like a PDF of the diagram, contact Susie:
SusieV@scc.wa.gov. See page eight for a link to "soil painting."

Clark County kids enjoy "soil painting."

District Ideas and News (cont.)

Thurston CD Revamps Outreach Campaign



Thurston Conservation District has been partnering with Thurston County Environmental Health Dept. since 2004 to help residents in the Henderson Inlet Watershed reduce non-point pollution sources. One tool used for several years has been a “watershed pledge” (called the “Shellfish Protection District Stewardship Program”) which offers residents ideas for pollution prevention behaviors and a pledge to carry out chosen actions. Pledge participants receive all kinds of incentives to help them with their new actions as well as a beautiful, recycled glass sun catcher (right.)



To breathe new life into the campaign, TCD staff decided to convene two focus groups of local residents to get their feedback on how the name of the campaign and its materials could be made more attractive to people. The District heard some surprising and very helpful comments about people’s perceptions of words like “pledge” (many thought it meant giving money), “stewardship” (many weren’t sure what it

meant), and “watershed” (another confusing term for people.) Based on that feedback, TCD redesigned the campaign, calling it “Clear Choices for Clean Water,” and now looks forward to helping more residents this coming year with their pollution preventing efforts.

Outreach & Education Resources

Ecology Toolbox Helps Get the Word Out on Pollution Prevention

The Dept. of Ecology has renewed its pollution prevention campaign:

“Washington Waters — Ours to Protect.” Visit www.ecy.wa.gov/washington_waters/index.html to view revised and new outreach materials.

The website contains a “tool kit” of posters and fact sheets that can be downloaded and customized to include an organization’s logo and local contact information. No permission is needed to use these materials! Outreach suggestions are also included on the website. Topics covered are: small farm manure management, dog waste, yard care, septic maintenance, recreational boating, and car maintenance. There are statewide as well as Puget Sound and Eastern Washington posters to choose from.



Outreach and Education Resources (cont.)

National Geographic Article: Where Food Begins



WSSC Commissioner Lynn Bahrych sent in the following information: "*Where Food Begins* was the cover story for the September 2008 National Geographic Magazine. It is all about 'the most basic of all resources, the soil.' The cover shows a cross section of fertile soil with a green plant sprouting from a good-looking root system. The message of the 24-page article on global soil conditions, present and past, is this: 'Even as humankind is ratcheting up its demands on soil, we are destroying it faster than ever before.' The centerfold of the article is an image of the Palouse, with soil blowing behind a cultivator. Perfect timing for us! "

This timely article can be downloaded at: <http://ngm.nationalgeographic.com/2008/09/soil/mann-text>. The website includes a link to a "soil quiz," which is a definite eye-opener.

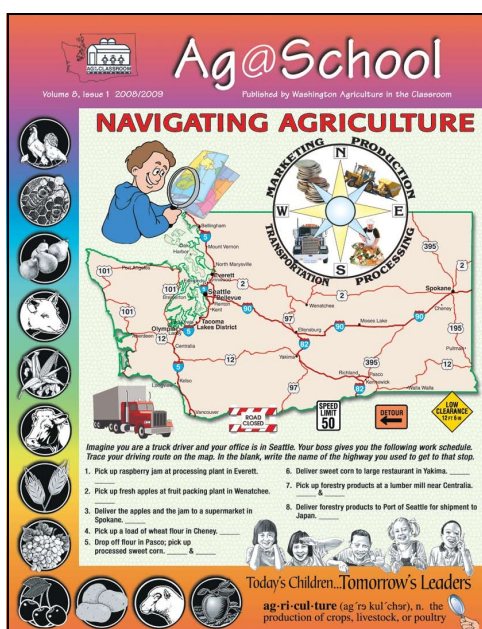
Washington Agriculture Education Summit

In late September educators from around the state met in Ellensburg for a day-long summit to discuss education programs about Washington agriculture. The summit was initiated by PRIME Curriculum, and attendees included educators from six conservation districts (Benton, Clark, Franklin, King, Okanogan, Skagit) and WSSC. Following is a list of some of the participants and their websites with great resources:



Kara Kaelber from Franklin CD explains her district's education programs at the Ag Education Summit in Ellensburg.

- **PRIME Curriculum Alliance** lessons and activities help students discover connections between natural resources, professionals who responsibly utilize these resources, and the consumables created by them to support our society. PRIME provides hands-on science kits that integrate with Washington State EALRs and GLEs. Topics include bees, eggs, fruits, and much more. Visit <http://www.primecurriculum.com/> to see the extent of PRIME's offerings.



- **Washington Ag in the Classroom (WAIC)** is an education program aimed at enhancing agricultural literacy in K-12 students and educators. The goal is helping teachers, especially those with little knowledge of agriculture, integrate the study of this vast industry into existing curriculum. WAIC produces three student activity magazines (example at left) per year along with teacher guides. For more information or to download past issues, visit <http://www.waic.net/>.
- **Provider Pals** is a non-profit group whose mission is to build a common-ground bridge of understanding and respect between urban youth, rural youth, and their natural resource providers. The group links people in the natural resources industries (farmers, loggers, miners) with classrooms around the nation. Through letters and visits, the "Provider Pal" teaches students where things come from and how they're produced. To learn more, visit <http://www.providerpals.com/index.htm>.

Outreach and Education Resources (cont.)

Climate Change Workshops Coming to Your Area



On October 24, Kara Kaelber, Franklin CD, and Denise Buck, N. Yakima CD, attended a facilitator training to conduct teacher workshops for *Cool School Challenge*, a cutting edge climate curriculum. This curriculum won both the 2008 President's Environmental Youth Award and WSU's Imagine Tomorrow competition. The workshop was presented by Ecology's Rhonda Hunter, and trained facilitators will soon be scheduling workshops throughout the state.

Looking for Promos?

If you're looking for give-away items that can be printed with your name and logo, visit www.tradeshowexhibitor.com, a company that supplies items (many made from recycled materials) including: gum, chocolates, tees, seed packets, recycled pencils, state-shaped magnets, lollipops, fortune cookies, visors, litter bags, rulers, key rings, frisbees, ice scrapers, and lip balm. (How about giving away fortune cookies with fortunes that say, "Cost-share dollars and free technical help await you at your local conservation district!") If you're looking for coloring books as give-aways, here are a few resources:



Recycling coloring book:

www.crestline.com/product/new+items/coloring+book+recycling.do

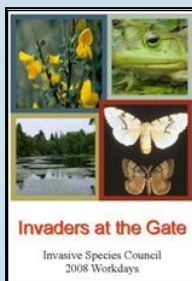
Conservation Coloring books (can be printed with a logo)

http://coloringbookwarehouse.com/coloring_activity_books/environment_conservation

USGS water posters (including black & white ones to color)

<http://water.usgs.gov/outreach/OutReach.html>

Invasive Species Council Workdays Held



In September and October, two workshops were held, one in Parkland and one in Pasco, to advance the implementation of Washington's first-ever strategic plan to prevent and control invasive species: *Invaders at the Gate: Washington Invasive Species Council 2008 Strategic Plan*. The workshops sought to answer: 1) Who will be responsible for carrying out implementation of each recommendation; 2) What are the most important elements of each recommendation to be implemented; and 3) How will each recommendation be funded. Visit http://www.rco.wa.gov/invasive_species/default.htm to download a copy.

EEAW Hosts Annual Conference in Wenatchee this Year

The Environmental Education Association of Washington will be hosting its annual conference in Wenatchee on November 12-15 with the theme, "Generation Green." More than 350 teachers, non-formal educators, and other stakeholders are expected to convene to share ideas and tools for excellent environmental education. Laura Clark, Okanogan CD, will present a session on CD education programs, and Susie Vanderburg will be hosting a display for the Commission and Washington State Envirothon.



Soil Poster Contest (cont. from page two)

From Easy to Elaborate: How Your District Can Get Onboard!

If you've never sponsored a poster contest before, there are many options and tools to help you, depending on the level of involvement you choose. At minimum, you'll need to get the word out, provide entry forms, judge all entries, provide a local prize, and send the winning posters to the Commission office in Lacey by May 31, 2009 for the state-level contest.

Following is a list of activities for promoting the Soil Poster Contest in your district, starting with super-easy ideas and ending with more elaborate ones: (* means that samples are available online.)

- Send a press release to your local newspaper.*
- Write a newsletter article for your district newsletter and for other groups too (4-H, NRCS, FFA.)*
- Send flyers to local schools and libraries.*
- Do a proclamation for NACD National Stewardship Week (May) or for International Compost Awareness Week at the beginning of May.
- Make presentations to local teachers.*
- Provide soil education activities for local classrooms, home schools, and/or clubs.*
- Team up with an art teacher to offer an after-school poster-making class for interested students.
- Sponsor a speakers' series or incorporate speakers into farm tours and workshops.
- Sponsor a Project Learning Tree (PLT) teacher workshop, with emphasis on soil lessons. (Contact Lynne Ferguson for help organizing a workshop: L.Ferguson@wfpa.org)
- Sponsor a community Soil Festival or a "Soil Sleuth" event in which participants must visit several sites to gather soil facts, solve a puzzle, and win a prize.

NACD has provided a number of resources to help districts sponsor the Soil Poster Contest as well as to help provide soil education. (See page nine for details.) The following NACD web pages are examples of the many resources offered:

http://www.nacdnet.org/education/contests/poster/2009/soil_painting.pdf
(how to do soil painting)

http://www.nacdnet.org/education/contests/poster/2009/what_makes.pdf
(how to design a good poster)

In addition, you can download the following resources from the WSCC website at www.scc.wa.gov. (Click on the "Dig It" button.)

- Contest rules
- Contest entry form
- Sample press release
- Sample newsletter article
- Sample flyer
- PowerPoint presentation to promote the contest (includes the importance of soil, contest rules, and "what makes a good poster")



**Flyer available for download
at Commission website**

Soil Poster Contest (cont.)

DIG IT!

The Secrets of Soil

2009 NACD Stewardship Theme: DIG IT! The Secrets of Soil

Look for materials available for sale at the NACD Marketplace store—www.nacdstore.org
Available end of summer 2008. Watch the e-notes for updates!
Sign up for e-notes at <http://nacdn.net.org/news/publications/enotes/>

Materials available will be:

Items for purchase in the NACD Marketplace (late summer 2008)

- Student booklets for grades K-1; 2-3; 4-5; 6-8
- Posters:
 - 1) All American Soils (state soil profiles)
 - 2) Soils in Your Everyday Life
 - 3) 2009 Calendar (soils theme)
- Bookmark
- Soils Festival Guide
- Placemat/Activity Sheet
- CD with a PowerPoint for each student booklet and more
- Program Insert, Program Blank
- Educators Guide
- Big Book Soils for grades K-3
- And more!

Downloadable items:

Work sheets
Educators Guide
Poster Contest Information
(additional new categories for 2009!)

And more!

Additional information at:
www.nacdnet.org/stewardship/

Stewardship Week
April 26-May 3, 2009

Materials are being developed for soils education outreach & NACD Stewardship in partnership with:

NACD
www.nacdnet.org



Smithsonian Institution
forces.si.edu/soils/



Smithsonian Institution

Soil Science Society of America
www.soils.org



National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD)

509 Capitol Court
Washington DC 20002

Phone: 202-547-6223
www.nacdnet.org

To place orders (late summer 2008):
Visit: www.nacdstore.org
Customer Service
1-888-695-2433



"Unless someone like you cares a whole awful lot, nothing is going to get better it's not." Dr. Seuss

Questions?
NACD Contact person:
Susan Schultz
317-326-2952
stewardship@nacdn.net.org

Outreach Ideas from around the Nation

Mansfield, Ohio SWCD Conducts “Women in the Outdoor” Event

This past summer, a large group of women spent the day learning the arts of fly fishing, outdoor cooking, and more during the eighth annual “Women in the Outdoors” event, sponsored each year by the Richland County Soil & Water Conservation District and partners. This year’s day-long event included canoeing, landscaping, nature crafting, auto maintenance, horsemanship, plant propagation, fly fishing, and outdoor cooking. Along with a luncheon prepared during the outdoor-cooking workshop, the event also included a silent auction, raffle, door prizes, and a chance to learn more about the District and its partner organizations.



Illinois SWCD also Hosts a Women’s Education Event

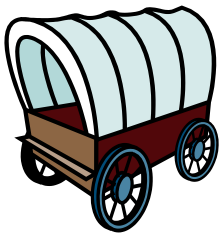
The Iroquois County Soil and Water Conservation District hosted a “Lady Ag Seminar” last August. Local speakers presented on topics such as “farmstead windbreaks” and “long term conservation practice opportunities for you.” Entertainment and lunch were also provided.

Maine SWCD Conducts Tree I.D. Workshop

Franklin County Soil & Water Conservation District hosted a tree identification workshop for families last August in Farmington. In addition to learning to identify specific trees by their bark, leaves, and color, participants learned about hardwood products, Christmas tree growth, and wildlife habitats. The \$18 fee included a free Tree Identification Book.



Trail of History Draws Huge Crowds in Woodstock, Illinois



McHenry County Conservation District recently sponsored the annual Trail of History, a living history re-enactment of the Northwest Territory between 1670-1850. The Trail of History featured interpreters from across country demonstrating trades and crafts common in the early settler days. Visitors enjoyed experiencing the kitchen house, frontier school, and Métis Village, in addition to making corn husk dolls, playing old-fashioned games, or dressing up in old-fashioned clothes. Other activities included a re-enactment of military tactics during the French and Indian War, Dr. Balthazar’s traveling medicine show, swordsmanship and blacksmith demonstrations, and a variety of musicians.

McHenry County CD Promotes Native Wildflower Seed Collecting

In a recent newsletter, MCCD discussed the collection of native seeds “The use of prairie plants and wildflowers are finding their way into mainstream landscaping. Gardens, parks, yards, and even large scale corporate campuses are favoring a more naturalized landscape. And why not? Using native plant species to recreate plant and wildlife communities only makes economical and environmental sense. Restoring and preserving landscapes on a large scale, like the Conservation District which will restore anywhere from five to 100 acres at a time, or on a smaller private lot are equally important in creating and sustaining diverse plant and wildlife communities throughout the county.” Visit www.mccd.org/web/assets/publications/newsletter/2008/Fall%202008/Fall%20Landscapes%20Total.pdf to learn more about the techniques of collecting native wildflower seeds in Illinois.

